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Brainwashers at Work

To the Editor of THE EAGLE:—

In its editorial, "We Need No Junkets to Captive Nations," [Feb. 4] *The Eagle* rendered a public service. I could have wished, however, that this editorial were less polite and touched pertinently upon a national tendency to wear blinders in viewing whatever relates to communism.

The committee proposed by Conte, according to the published release, would be formed to "study conditions in the captive nations." The report goes on with a detailed condemnation of Moscow's alleged policies and infamies in these countries. From such a catalogue it would appear that no further study is needed since the author of the bill and his colleagues have already prejudged conditions there. Under the circumstances the committee could only wind up as another costly and meddlesome junket.

Since we are accustomed to label all Communist countries with such terms as "Iron Curtain" and "Brainwashing" it is time to examine our own objectivity and openmindedness in our estimates of distant events and regimes.

A case in point is the recent suggestion that we inform our citizens about political realities by giving "spiked" courses in communism, both in college and in secondary schools. Speaking for myself I am not so sure that our secondary school students are up to a dispassionate study of current political ideologies and economics, but our college students certainly are. Yet whenever this proposal is made, it's protagonists hurry to assure us that in these courses the students will be "made aware" of the evils of the Marxist system—another way of saying that the teachers would pre-evaluate all materials taught, and doctor

it to conclusions they consider "safe."

It requires no great intellect to see that this is no way to teach a subject, in the same way that a prejudiced congressional committee is not equipped to do a serious study of captive countries. You do not ask a voodoo priest to teach Christian theology, an osteopath to teach medicine and surgery or a fundamentalist preacher to teach the genetics of anthropology. This is not education, especially when it is monitored by mob and bugle patriots. It is purest brainwashing and hardly differs from the kind we assume is prevalent in China and in other Communist countries.

If our country is to survive an economic and ideological death struggle with Communist countries (forgetting for a while the insistent question of our joint survival from "multimegadeath" preparations) we should be informed, not deluded about the nature of the opposition.

The college student of today may someday be president or secretary of state — or a senator. He is also an American citizen entrusted with the responsibility of picking tomorrow's leaders and making the decisions, in peace or peril, which will keep us great, mediocre or destroy us altogether.

American students and citizens are no sheep who need to be herded by self-appointed shepherds whether of the legislature, the CIA, by Pentagon press officers or by church laymen who would lend authority to their assumptions by dangling honorary initials after their names. If we dislike Iron Curtains and brainwashing let's exclude thought control from our national institutions.

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